

STET

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Editorial . . .

It would seem that this is the time for the mice to play, for the cat, in the person of the editor, is far, far away. As a matter of fact, he is at this very moment at Camp Borden which is, we believe, somehow connected with a certain Elsie — or perhaps we have our locations mixed. In any event, while Mr. Roberts is dashing about making Ottawa and vicinity safe for democracy, we are learning that there is a future in journalism for the young and aspiring neophyte. We confess ourselves surprised that an April appointment as office boy should lead to the temporary use of the editorial chair in July, but we are resolved to make the most of the opportunity.

With this amount of explanation, we hope that you will find the contents of this issue both interesting and informative. Personally, we are especially pleased with the article on the Trumpeter Swan, since this is a piece of Alberta natural life that

may be new to most of our readers. Then there is food for thought in Mr. Craine's suggestion that life can be beautiful if no cosmic guinea pigs are about, and Mr. Shelton's "Face in the Water" is a nature lesson in more ways than one. We could mention some of the other items too, but that might spoil your pleasure in the items themselves. Our pictures are once again the contribution of the Crossroads Camera Club, one of the most helpful and useful photographic organizations we have yet encountered.

And now to quote from Mr. Roberts himself: "We hope that Summer School students, and all those who do not regularly attend the University, or who read our magazine for the first time, will find something interesting in this issue. The little fellow on the front, by the way, is a gopher, a species almost extinct in this province. Or are we thinking of something else."



The very cheapness of literature is making even wise people forget that if a book is worth reading, it is worth buying. No book is worth anything which is not worth much; nor is it serviceable, until it has been read, re-read, and loved, and loved again; and marked, so that you can refer to the passages you want in it.—Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*.

TOWN PLANNING

To Meet Alberta's Present and Future Problems . . .

By MARY L. IMRJE

Editor's Note: This is the second prize entry in our town planning contest. First and third prize winners have been published in previous issues.

This subject, by its very title, seems to break itself down into three considerations;

- (1) What is Town Planning?
- (2) What are Alberta's present and future needs?
- (3) How can these needs be satisfied?

What is Town Planning?

In considering Town Planning in relation to Alberta, one can mean either the planning of the towns and cities in the province, or the regional planning of the whole province. Both involve the planning of land for its use to the best advantage of the people using it. Regional Planning is rural planning on the regional sphere, and considers the conservation of natural resources, their most advantageous utilization, the relationship of natural resources to transportation and industrial outlets, and the locations of population centres. Such planning is of prime importance to Alberta and the whole natural region of which Alberta is a part, but it in itself, is a complete and separate subject, although related to Town Planning. For the purposes of this report we shall confine our discussions to planning within cities and towns, and in the areas adjacent thereto which affect and are affected by the city or town.

It must first be understood that the results of Town Planning are brought about in a negative way. Rather than accomplishing the ideal overnight at great expense, it plans for the ideal, and prevents adverse development, so that when the time comes, it may be had at less expense. It deals with highways between towns, streets within a town, business and industrial

areas, residential neighborhoods and recreational areas. Town Planning may be defined as the making of a careful analysis of what a city or town has, the making of a future estimate of what it will need and want, and the establishing of a systematic procedure whereby this may be brought about.

What Are Alberta's Present and Future Needs?

The abnormally rapid expansion of Alberta's cities and towns during the present boom is making people more acutely aware of the fact that the layout of these cities and towns is neither ideal nor adequate for this expansion. Much of Alberta's deficiencies in this regard date back to its original development. Dominion government, real estate dealers and surveyors in eastern cities laid out the rural areas of the west in sections and townships, based on north-south east-west lines, ignoring rivers, mountains, lakes and contours. When they came to a subdivision for a town or city, they probably started it at an existing fort, set its boundaries rectangularly so as to include several townships, disregarded the future suitability of that site for such a centre, and disregarded all the natural features of the terrain. Many were the optimistic young western-minded men who purchased lots later discovered to be at the bottom of a lake! And so the rectangular, grid-iron, north and south, east and west pattern governed all subdivisions, whether rural or city, whether logical or not. Rapidly in the booms, slowly in the busts, the country was developed along this pre-determined pattern.

Alberta, being such a new province, suf-

fers from a lack of the administrative background of centuries of experience, so invaluable in the old country, and evident even in Eastern Canada. The cities and towns in it having been so recently developed, have such few historical sites and buildings of such recent vintage that it is seldom we consider them worth preserving. On the other hand, there are many advantages, and hopes for a better future because of the very newness of our province. Even the larger cities have few buildings that are so large or so permanent for it to be out of the question to have them removed if considered advisable. The development of the whole province is at such an early stage, that the mistakes of the past can soon be overshadowed by the planning of the future.

And who can deny that everything points to a great future for Alberta? We know now of vast natural resources that have only just been tapped. Our farm lands are fertile, and our crop yields consistently good. We know of magnificent tourist attractions still hidden to those but the most pioneering of us. We know that these things, when developed, will bring more business and more people to the province, and to its cities and towns. For the sake of the present population and the future population, therefore, we must give considerable thought and planning to our future, so that this development will be an asset, rather than a liability to the people of this province.

How Can We Satisfy These Needs In an Expanding City?

Let us assume that we are living in a large town or city in Alberta, with a future likelihood of tremendous expansion. Being intelligent citizens, we have hired a person, called Mr. Smith, who might be classified as a "Town Planner" to consider our situation and make recommendations. Just how will our Mr. Smith approach the problem, what sort of recommendations will he make, and what is the likelihood of a better city for us to live in?

Preliminary Survey of the City

First of all Mr. Smith will make a complete and detailed survey of existing conditions in our city. He wants to know all about the people who live and work in it, so

that he can decide what facilities they need, where the boundaries of their neighborhood should be, and what arterial roads are necessary to get them to work and play. He must study the present use of land for business, industry and recreation so that he can decide how each will be best expanded, and best served, with a minimum of alteration. He must study the natural barriers of the City so that his recommendations are within the realms of possibility. Present traffic routes, and the amounts they are used, are also of vital importance in deciding how these routes could be improved and where other through traffic arteries are needed. He must analyse what it is that makes the city "tick"—is it a grain distributing centre or does it thrive on oil? Is it a ranching centre, or is lumbering its basic industry? Then he must also consider the country-side adjacent to the City, and the highways to and from the city. These two factors are often not within the control of the city, but have a direct bearing on Town Planning, just as it does on them. And finally, in conjunction with all these considerations, our Mr. Smith must look into the future, and arrive at some sort of prediction on how all these factors will be altered.

None of these surveys are easily made, and it is far more difficult to assess the significance of them. That is why we hired Mr. Smith for this task, because he has studied the problem in all its aspects, worked out similar problems in other cities, and is therefore a skilled technician in whom we are prepared to place our confidence.

Our Mr. Smith, by this time, you may think, has spent a lot of time, wasted a lot of public funds, and has nothing to show for it but many pretty colored maps. But wait a moment—he is only just beginning, and it is only now that YOU begin to enter so importantly into the picture of this thing called Town Planning. He has not yet consulted you, John Citizen, as to what are your wishes, needs and hopes, and he has not yet consulted with the trained personnel of the School Board, Department of Health and Welfare, Police Department, Transit System, and other authorities whose work is so vitally associated with the planning of their city. He will explain

to these groups of citizens and officials the significances of the studies he has already made. He will obtain from them facts and ideas to influence his planning, and he will work with them throughout the whole process of making his recommendations.

The Master Plan

Finally, after months of diligent work and conferences, he will present to you, John Citizen, for your final approval, disapproval or suggestions, what is known as a "Master Plan" for your City. This will not be a dictatorial decree for the next twenty or thirty years, but rather a presentation of what seems at this time likely to serve the city better in the future. It is not a blueprint of something that will come about overnight at great expense to you and fellow citizens. It is rather a guide to the way in which further development—by both private and public funds—should be made so as to eventually arrive at the result desired in a more economical way than would otherwise be possible. Mr. Smith will not feel a bit badly, if, in a year or two, some unpredictable circumstance makes many of his assumptions false, and his plan is altered accordingly. In fact he almost expects this, realizing that many things cannot be foreseen. But he also knows, that without a plan, sincerely adopted, rigidly adhered to and intelligently revised, all those things which the citizens want and need will be much more difficult and expensive to acquire when they become necessary.

Let us now examine Mr. Smith's Master Plan and try to interpret from the array of colours, what it means to us. Probably the first spot you will hunt for on the map will be the lot on which your home stands. You may be surprised to find it is still there. Perhaps the property of that little old saw mill across the street is designated park. This merely means that no further development will be allowed on this property, and eventually it will be purchased by the city and made into a park for you and your neighbors to enjoy. Perhaps you see on the map that the main street a block away, over which your children have to cross to go to school, has been closed from through traffic, still leaving the majority of the houses on it intact, and several

blocks over, a narrow street shown widened, and smoothed out to take the traffic, that formerly was bisecting your neighborhood. Probably the location of the future major street is not built up, and by planning it now, it will only be necessary to purchase parts of the lots on it for the desired widening. You are just beginning to see now what this planner is trying to get at in your neighborhood, and are curious as to what he would do if he could start from scratch.

Mr. Smith is now explaining about the layout of a future residential neighborhood, completely undeveloped at present, where the best of everything can be given to the people who will live in it. He explains that it is bounded by major streets, rather than bisected by them, and the area enclosed within these major streets is such that its population can support one elementary school. This school will be within easy walking distance of all the children, and none of them will have to cross a major street. The neighborhood will have its own shopping centre, often shared by adjacent neighborhoods, and zoning will prevent shops from straggling out of these conveniently located areas. It will also contain play lots for smaller children, and that small ravine that winds through the neighborhood has been preserved as a natural park, and kept accessible to all the people. Beside the school, sharing its playground and assembly hall, is a community centre, to serve the neighborhood's needs in the evenings. There will be all types of homes in the neighborhood. When the young people get married they can find a suitable apartment without moving across the city. Similarly older people, unable to keep up their larger homes, can be housed in familiar surroundings. This is done by providing well defined zones for single family houses, duplexes, and apartment buildings, in locations most suitable to their types.

Several adjacent neighborhoods are indicated on Mr. Smith's plan as combining to form what he may term a "community". Such a residential unit is large enough to have its own high school, library, theatre, and a shopping centre of sufficient size and scope so that shopping trips to town can be cut to a minimum.

So much for the family life at home, at

school, and at play within its own neighborhood and community. Mr. Smith will now turn your attention to the major streets by which the father can go to work, or the family can go for visiting or recreation to any part of town. He reminds you that none of these should bisect any neighborhood, and shows you what changes are recommended to change such mistakes in existing residential sections. These major streets in the new areas do not run straight north-south or east-west, because a diagonal street will lead you more directly where you want to go, and thus reduce the mileage of major streets to be built and maintained. Access to these major streets is reduced to a minimum, so that traffic on them can flow quickly and be uninterrupted by frequent intersections. The Master Plan will appear to be a network of major streets, running around neighborhoods to business and industrial sections, and connecting opposite parts of the city by routes that avoid the congested business districts.

Tied up with the major street proposals are the highways connecting your city with adjacent cities and towns. You will notice that the highway west on which you go to your summer cottage with great difficulty for the first five miles because of intersections, stores, and the narrowness of the street, is shown on Mr. Smith's plan as of no importance at all. Then you see a new proposed re-routing of this highway, through undeveloped areas, where it is possible to reserve considerable land on either side of the highway, and to limit access to it to a minimum. Here will be strategically located future business areas for filling stations, lunch counters and auto courts, so situated so that they best serve the motorist, without interfering with the smooth flow of traffic for the ones who do not want to stop.

For a considerable distance all around the future boundaries of your expanded city Mr. Smith has asked that land be reserved for what he may call a "green belt." By this he merely means that land in this area will be sold and used in larger parcels for market gardens, or the person who likes a several acre plot. The object of this belt is to restrict the straggling uneconomical growth of the densely built up area of your city, and to keep it within reasonably esta-

blished boundaries. If it is necessary for the city to expand beyond this, it has been found to be more economical, and more pleasant for all concerned to establish what may be called a "satelite town," outside the city, in which people who work in the city may live. This satelite town however, should be as independent as possible, and should offer all the facilities of a small town. Industries and business should be encouraged to develop there, so that employment can be found to prevent too many people having to commute to the city.

In almost any developed city, the business district is the most permanent, and therefore, for good or for bad, it is necessary to accept its general location, and hope for improvements to it by encouraging expansion in the most desirable directions. Traffic and parking improvements even in the existing sections, however, can be made by reservations being placed on some of the cheaper, more easily acquired land. Mr. Smith may show a suitable location for a down town park, or civic centre, or for parking lots or ramp garages. By planning for these today, he will say, they can be acquired at less cost than if expensive buildings are allowed to be built on them.

The other type of focal point for the working man is the industrial area. These naturally locate themselves on railways or on good trucking routes, but far too often become obnoxious to residential or other uses close at hand. The Master Plan will show industries grouped together in large areas, and will attempt eventually to get rid of small isolated industries who are all the more objectionable because of that fact. Around these industrial areas will be undeveloped park strips to protect adjacent land from the deterioration that so often occurs near industry. New industrial sites will be proposed near railways or good trucking routes, but so located as to be served by adjacent residential communities, thus avoiding long trips morning and night to and from work.

There will be large areas of green on Mr. Smith's map, with the general classification of parkland. This will include developed playlots and park for each neighborhood, both existing ones, and those to be acquired and developed. In addition to these every city needs larger parks and sports

centres, and undeveloped parkland for hikes and picnics. These can often be had on natural beauty spots of the city such as ravines, river banks, or lake shores. With sufficient of this undeveloped parkland, along with neighborhood parks, many citizens who now seek refuge in the country would be content to explore the beauties of their own city. In many cases we do not realize the lack of large park areas until certain vacant lots previously used as parks, begin to develop into new residential districts. Mr. Smith will again stress the need of planning for these parks, so that the land can be acquired cheaply before it is built upon.

Town Planning for the Small Town

There is no town or village in Alberta too small to need Town Planning, but there are probably many too small to feel that need, and therefore not fortunate enough to have the services of Mr. Smith. In such a case it must be the responsibility of the citizens entirely, to look at their town with vision to its future and with constructive criticism. The principles of how to plan apply to the small town in a similar way as to the city we have just discussed, but of course, must be modified according to the size. Most small towns in Alberta suffer from three things: a highway, a railroad, and an obvious lack of imagination. They lack the feeling of a complete unit, and often appear more a part of the highway or the railroad than of themselves. It is fortunate that of late years many towns

have had their highway by-pass them. This relieves the main streets of the excessive traffic hazard and dust caused by the motorist who is not going to stop anyway, and an attractive entrance to the town from the by-pass, will encourage into it any motorist who was desirous of stopping. Assuming therefore, that your town either has a by-pass, or is reserving land for one, far enough from the centre of town so that expansion will not come near it, we have a better basis on which to make a community of people out of that town. It should be planned to have a compact and attractively arranged business section. Its residential streets should be interesting, and well kept-up. Its parks should be ample and easily accessible, and its recreational facilities and schools related to its residential areas. Much can be done in all existing towns to improve them along these lines, and to see that future expansion is carried out in an orderly and pleasanter manner.

Now that your old superstitions that planners cost towns a lot of money and that their plans are merely pigeonholed, are gone, you, yourself, will want to see that your city is planned, and that these plans are not pigeonholed. You will want to have your neighborhood improved, and see that all new neighborhoods are laid out on better lines. In this democracy of which we are so proud, we are the ones who must agitate for planning, and for the advantages and economies that result from it. If we want better towns and cities tomorrow, we can have them if we plan today.



PRAIRIE VIGNETTE

SVERRE SOLBERG

The snow was well gone, and the dull gray prairie was acquiring a greenish tinge. The sloughs were reflecting the blue of the sky, except when the breezes chased each other across their surfaces, alternately lightening and darkening them. My father threw a gunny sack over his shoulder and walked away down the road. It was a Sunday afternoon, and he was going to fetch a little pig from one of the neighbors. I was excited because getting a little pig in the spring was an event, almost as exciting as that which took place a week or two before Christmas, when the same pig, now big, sleek, and fat, was butchered to provide special fare for the holiday season, and food throughout the winter and early spring.

This was the third spring since my parents had homesteaded on the prairie that my father had walked off with a gunny sack over his shoulder and returned with a piglet in it. Most of the neighbors could afford to keep pigs all year and raise litters. We could not, and hence the annual purchase.

A few hours later my father came up the road again, throwing out his toes as was his wont, and leaning a little ahead as he held on to the sack over his shoulder with both hands. I was strongly tempted to run to meet him, but felt reticent about doing this. It wasn't just proper to show such excitement about anything, so I waited outside till he was in the yard and heading for the pig-pen before dashing into the house and calling, "Ma! He's here." Mother stopped her work and followed me down to the pen. Father had laid down the sack and was making a final check of the pen and the little sty. We had only a sod barn, and the sty was up against one side of this, to give it a little added support and shelter. It was only a large box,

put together from packing crates in which our belongings had been packed when we moved in. There was one board on which was stamped a large picture of a fish. This stamp fascinated me. I had never seen a fish that I could remember, and I often asked my parents about it. Of course there were sometimes fish for sale in town, but I was almost never there, and my father never brought any home. Fish cost money.

The pen itself was small, and improvised from odds and ends of boards and wire, reinforced by rocks. Having inspected it, father went back to the sack on the ground. It showed a longish lump which remained still, but emitted a few questioning grunts. Father lifted the sack over the fence into the pen, unwound the twine, took hold of the bottom and turned the sack slowly upside down. Out struggled a little black pig with a white blaze on its head. He immediately found his feet, and adopted a tense, stiff-legged posture together with a sharp gaze out of the corner of his eye. He stood perfectly still, giving a short grunt in a sort of "What's all this about" tone once in a while.

Father reached down to pet him, when piggy came to life with the suddenness of the release of a steel spring. He made a sudden sideways slash at the hand with snapping jaws. His middle bent out and the next moment he was two feet away as if he really had been a bent steel spring which had been released and had snapped to a new position. One instant he had moved with lightning speed. The next he was again in the same unmoving, stiff-legged, but evidently alert posture.

My mother said, "My my," and went to fetch some milk. Father laughed, and put a little V-shaped trough with square ends in the pen. Mother said, "Gussie, gussie,"

and poured in the milk. Piggy immediately abandoned his on-guard attitude. He put his forefeet into the trough at one end, turned himself as parallel with it as he could, lowered his head and started in. He moved up towards the other end of the trough, making loud smacking noises as he went. It seemed as if he thought it necessary to chase the milk, and when he got to the end he must have thought for a moment that it had disappeared down in the corner, for he pushed hard with his snout, and his front feet slipped as he tried to get better purchase. He then moved back to the other end and started over again.

We thought it was an agreeable sight, and my parents commented very favorably on him. They agreed he was an uncommonly fine pig. He was straight-backed, long in the body, with sharp ears and a long snout: all indications of a good bacon hog. Father said these long-bodied pigs were apt to be delicate, their backbones were easily wrenched or broken, when they attained great age, but that was something we need not worry about. Piggy was a sow, but somehow I feel more like referring to him as a he. Because of his color he was named Blackie.

Blackie thrived and grew, although his rations could hardly be called balanced. He got every bit of the garbage (except bones) and also the dishwater, for what little nutriment there was in that, as well as whatever milk could be spared, and screenings well soaked up beforehand. All summer my mother and I picked armfuls of greens for him. In the corner where the feed stacks had stood there was a heavy layer of rotted straw which held moisture well, and here the weeds flourished. There were stalks of lamb's quarters, taller than I was then, with their starchy gray-green leaves, wheels of dark green succulent Russian thistle, and over all crawled and climbed the vines of wild buckwheat. Blackie ate all three with relish, but he seemed to favor the buckwheat as a tid-bit. Since it was frequently quite tangled, he would pin it down with one cleft foot while tearing away mouthfuls of the tender arrow-shaped leaves. He liked earth in his greens no better than humans do, and if some from the roots had sifted in among the leaves, he would shake the plant violently to get it

out. It was a pleasure to watch him eat Russian thistle. He would take a huge mouthful, such that a mass of it would stick out on either side. There would be one sharp crunch and the stuff on either side would fall away, cut as cleanly as if with scissors. The weeds really formed the mainstay of his diet.

The proverbial uncleanness of the pig is a libel. True, he seeks his food anywhere it may be found, and eats it too heartily when he does find it, without standing on any points of etiquette. Encumbered by layers of fat, he attempts to cool himself wherever there is moisture. But in certain respects he is a very cleanly and orderly animal. Whenever straw was thrown into his pen Blackie carried it, bit by bit in his mouth into his home, into the corner that he had reserved for his bed. He kept this pile of straw in shape, and on cool evenings wriggled down into it so that only his ears and the line of his back showed. He did not foul his bed or his house, but consistently used one corner of his pen as a privy.

Throughout the summer Blackie grew and grew, but kept the fine proportions of his youth. Mother and father agreed they had never seen a finer pig. They stopped to admire him almost each time they fed him. While they didn't see him as so much of pork chops, ham, sausage and bacon, but as a fine animal, nevertheless the thought that he would provide all these superbly was at the back of their minds. This was simply a thought of the natural conclusion of his piggy career.

A pig is a democrat and an individualist. Whenever one of us approached his pen, Blackie would come over and converse in assorted grunts. It would be a mistake to think he was only concerned about food. Just what he intended to convey we couldn't tell but often the hunger tone was lacking. He enjoyed being scratched with a stick, and if it was his flanks that were being scratched he would lie down on his side, close his eyes, and emit an occasional blissful grunt. He was on cordial terms with the chickens which came into his pen to scavenge. After he was well grown, he had occasional flighty moments when he broke out of his flimsy pen. At those times he would insist on getting acquainted with

the cats, the dog, the cows, and the horses, on terms of mutual interest and complete equality. A pig is not obsequious like a dog, a cold opportunist like a cat, hostile like a goose, or obedient like a horse. He is a firm believer in social democracy, rugged individualism, and "laissez faire." On those occasions when he broke out, it was impossible to drive or push him a foot, but he followed anywhere.

Autumn came, and my father gathered the harvest from the small area he had managed to get under cultivation. He had no machinery of his own, and had to do exchange work for his neighbors. All summer he had worked in a coal mine, getting a ride home each evening on one of the heavily loaded coal wagons which creaked by on its way to where the huge steamers with their many-sheared plows were turning over the prairie sod. Now he went out with a threshing gang, and for several weeks my mother and I were alone. We had screenings from the threshing for Blackie and the farmer on whose outfit father worked, and who had some land next to ours, and never bothered to pick up the screenings, had told father he could have them. My mother and I carefully scooped up every bit into sacks. Blackie got increased rations now, for when father came back and cold weather set in for good, he would be butchered.

Father came back and began to get things into shape for winter. When mother one day broached the subject of butchering, he was, strangely, rather non-committal, and he remained so each time the subject was brought up. One evening as he and I were eating our milk with dumplings, and I was, as always, acutely conscious that he was too noisy about it, he laid down his spoon and turned to my mother, busy at the stove, with a thoughtful frown,

"Maria, I have been thinking."

"Yes?" said my mother.

"About the pig." He said nothing more.

"Well?" asked my mother encouragingly.

"I've been wondering. It's such a fine sow. It would raise a remarkably fine litter, I'm sure."

"But we haven't the feed to keep it all winter and feed it and all those little pigs all next spring and summer."

"I know," he replied slowly. "It is a problem. That and no proper place to keep them, but I think we can manage it. We have all those screenings of Henry's, and I've made a little more than usual this fall. I know it will mean more work for you and

WHY WEEP MY LOVE

Why weep my love, you ask.

The dawn of a new day is here.

Why weep, you ask.

I weep for love:

Love as sad as the sound of a violin

Crying in the night

Throbbing with unbearable loneliness

Complete loneliness of two souls

Lost in the night.

Love as sad as the tempo of a waltz

In an empty ballroom,

Melody sweeping and falling

On the ears of ghosts shadowed

In an empty room.

Love as sad as the hushed moment

Before the dawn

When the sun glimmers deeply

Below the dark empty horizon

And hope is gone.

And then you say

With words that burn in my heart:

So sad is love

When we realize

That light laughter

Is even more sad.

Infinitely.

Vye Ulasovetz.

the boy. But there is such good money in pigs."

The money argument was undeniable, but there was another reason, why a decision was difficult to make.

"What will we have to eat this winter," she said as a fact, not as a question, "with no pork. And no ribs and sausages and

headcheese for Christmas," she added despondently.

The idea was almost frightening. A Christmas Eve without deeply browned pork ribs and sausages, no pickled headcheese to eat with the paper thin, leathery potato cake called "lefse." No crisp bacon throughout the winter, when Nature makes you so hungry for fats because of the cold. No delicious pork chop bones to pick. No cured hams to cut pink slices from in spring and early summer.

We were all three silent. "Well, Maria, what do you think is best?" asked father at last.

"You do what you think best," replied Mother. "I think we can manage. Star is coming fresh at New Year's. And we need the money."

"All right," said father with a sigh. "I'll take her over to Thompson's to be serviced the next time."

The next day he went over to a neighbor's on the stoneboat for a large box which was used for such errands. Several days later, when it was time, he hitched up the horses and drove the stoneboat with the box on it up to the pen. Mother easily enticed Blackie into the box with some feed and father quickly let the door down and fastened it. It was a cold dull day in early December, and the stoneboat slid over the half melted snow which had turned to ice.

Four days later father left to bring Blackie home. There had been a fresh fall of snow and the stoneboat slid easily along, leaving a deep parallel track. Mother and I waited expectantly for father's return. It would be nice to have Blackie home again, and there were visions of a dozen or so little pigs and then big fat ones to sell. The early darkness of the winter night came on and father was not back. Two times mother and I went out to stand shivering beside the house to see if we could catch the faint sound of the jingle of har-

ness or the iron grind of hoofs in the snow, which would indicate he was coming. Mother took off the lantern globe and polished it with brown paper.

The next time we went out father was coming. He was, in fact, quite close, and mother and I had hardly time to light the lantern and get our wraps on before he passed the house. We hurried out and walked behind the stoneboat down towards the pig-pen. I thought it was fun trying to get one foot exactly in line behind the other in one of the sleigh tracks.

"You were away a long time," said mother.

"Yes," he replied. "We had some trouble getting Blackie into the box. He was running around outside with all of Thompson's pigs. Those ice patches under the snow made catching him a slippery business too, but we finally made it. He fell down a couple of times."

We stopped. Father got some feed to tempt Blackie into the pen again. Mother held the lantern while father unfastened the door and lifted it up. We heard nothing from Blackie and when we peeped in we saw him lying on his side in the straw with his back to us.

"Could he be asleep?" asked my father wonderingly. "Come, come, come, Blackie."

"Gussie, gussie, gussie," called my mother. This call had always made Blackie come dashing eagerly. Now he didn't move. Father got a stick and poked him, gently at first, then harder, and harder. Blackie did not move.

I was only a small boy, but the scene is very vivid in my memory. The cold, bitter night, with the white, even surface of the snow stretching out to a great distance; the few scattered lights on the horizon; the frosted rumps of the horses and the dull brass on the harness; the cold light of the winter stars, and the silence, and the lantern light falling on my mother's face.



Saturday Night

by

Bernard J. McDonald

It was dusk, and the long avenue was almost deserted, except for a few huddled figures scurrying along in front of the steady wind, or bent into it. It was a North wind, cold and raw, and it whined along the dirty, dust-filled boulevard, stirring in its wake rustling whirlpools of crisp, Autumn-coloured leaves, restlessly rising and falling, tracing circular patterns along the sidewalks in front of the shaded shops. The long row of half-stripped poplars swayed and sighed under the merciless surge of the whistling wind. The sky was overcast a dull, monotonous grey, and the long irregular line of rectangular and inverted v-shaped roofs were vaguely outlined against it. The traffic lights on the corner of Ninth Street changed regularly from green, to amber, to red, to green again, but only an occasional car, with head-lights faintly glowing, made a brief appearance on the avenue. A tin can clattered noisily along the pavement, the whistle of a far-off train screeched a warning once, twice, then again, and was silent.

On the corner of Eighth Street, two small girls, their hair matted against their faces, took refuge in the alcove of a Drug Store, unwilling to turn into the direct blast of the cold wind. They were unaware of the aged, white-haired man who tapped his way past them. His small, hunched form pressed into the wind, and he was almost hidden in a swirling dust-cloud as he turned the corner. He was bare-headed, and his long feather-light strands of white hair were waving in all directions at once. He shuffled along the sidewalk, one hand firmly gripped on his cane, the other clinging to

the walls and windows for support. He groped his way along the length of the block, and rested for a minute with his arm around a lamp post. Then he pushed himself out on to the road, and staggered across it. There were no cars, and he made his way safely to the other side. He stepped on to the sidewalk, and a sudden gust of wind caught him off balance. The cane fell from his hand. He recovered it, and fell against the heavy wooden door of a church. He stayed there for a minute, not moving. Then, he unpeeled his hands from the door, and groped with them until he found the handle. He pulled it open, just a little, and squeezed himself through the entrance.

The church was in semi-darkness. The only lights burning were the single bulb in the choir loft, the many-coloured votive candles, and the sanctuary lamp, suspended above the altar railing. The candle-light case exaggerated shadows along the cream-plastered walls, and clearly lighted the portrait of the woman and child just above a four-tiered table of glowing candles. Behind the ornamented main altar, animated shadows played with the folds in the long, gold-coloured curtain. The two bright windows of stained-glass, one on each side, reflected some light on to the graceful, expressive statue forms, half-outlined against the windows. The only sounds were the low, moaning wind, and the occasional creaking of the roof.

Sitting motionless in the front pew was a young woman, wearing a fur coat and a silk kerchief, marked with gaily-coloured dancing dolls. Her hands were clasped,

and her head bowed in prayer. In the middle aisle, a small, wrinkled woman, wearing a black woollen shawl over her head, stood looking up at the Twelfth Station of the Cross. She bowed her head, genuflected and blessed herself, then moved on soundless feet on to the next Station.

The old man in the back seat was breathing heavily, and his face was flushed. He sat back, looking straight ahead of him, and repeatedly slid the palm of his hand over his white, walrus mustache. Then, with his thumbs, he wiped his watering eyes. They were clear, piercing eyes, and remarkably blue. He sniffed, and sighed, and his stooped shoulders rose and fell. With a thin, shaking hand, he reached into his tattered coat pocket and lifted out a rosary. He grabbed at the seat in front of him, and pulled himself down to a kneeling position. He made a Sign of the Cross with the crucifix, and started, half-aloud, to recite the Credo.

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth . . ."

The wind sighed at the windows, like a simmering kettle, and the well-worn boards in the old building continued to creak in protest. The two women seemed unaware of the old man's guttural noises. The woman in the shawl was kneeling now at the railing of the main altar. The younger woman hadn't moved; she sat statue-like, and silent.

The old man continued to recite the prayers of the Five Sorrowful Mysteries.

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee . . ." One of his thin, white hands was arched over his forehead, and covered his eyes. The other hung limp over the top of the seat; his thumb and forefinger, clutching at the small, black beads, moved slowly from one bead to the next, from one decade to another.

The wrinkled-faced woman tightened her shawl under her chin and noiselessly stole out of the church. The old man finished his last prayer.

" . . . we may imitate what they contain, and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ, our Lord. Amen."

He kissed the crucifix, and replaced the beads in his pocket. Then, with an effort, he shuffled out into the aisle, and leaning

for support on the arm of each seat, slowly made his way to the front of the church. He stopped in front of the table of votive lights, fumbled in a trousers pocket, and took out a small change purse. He lifted a dime from the purse and dropped it through the metal slot. It made a loud "clink" that echoed through the tomb-like quiet of the church. He scratched a match, and with a quivering hand, lighted a candle in a white cup on the top row. He hesitated while the match still burned, then lit a second candle beside the first. He blew on the match, and placed it on the side-tray. He reached for his purse again, slowly and deliberately opened it, and searched for another dime. He turned it over, and a nickel fell into his palm. He stared down at his outstretched palm, and sighed heavily. Hesitantly, he put the nickel in the slot, and with frantic gestures searched in his other pockets. He pulled out an old wallet with a broken zipper and unfolded it. In the celluloid picture compartment was a Holy picture, and a small, yellowish snapshot with ripped and blackened edges, showing a young, smiling couple, and a boy, hanging on to the man's hand. Also in view, from that part of the wallet reserved for "cheques", were the corners of two black-edged mass cards. One was frayed and grayish, the other—stiff, and still white.

There was no silver in the wallet either, and the old man slid it back into his pocket. Then he knelt, on one knee, in front of the array of candles. His hair was silvery in the candle-light, and he looked sorrowfully up at the portrait of the smiling lady and the child. After some minutes he got up, with some difficulty, and moved in short, shuffling steps down the side aisle, with his glassy eyes fixed straight ahead of him.

A cold blast of air shot through the church, and the back door slammed shut. A priest walked in. He removed his coat, placed it on a hook on the back wall, and entered the confessional.

Just as if the old man had expected him at that moment, he wearily inched his way along the aisle, and reached the confessional, divided into two partitions, just after the priest had entered it. He pushed aside the green velvet curtain, and sank on to

the kneeling bench. The heavy curtain fell into place, and all the light was shut out.

The priest, on the other side of the wall, opened the slide, and the old man, his eyes closed, and his head bobbing low, spoke through the criss-cross panel.

"Bless me Father, for I have sinned," he started in a low, raspy whisper, "it has been one week since my last confession. Since that time . . ." He paused, took a few short, jerky breaths, and swallowed hard. "Since that time,—I have offended God."

He told his sins, received his penance, then said to the priest, "I have forgotten—the candle! I have lit a candle for my boy. I had only one nickel—I am sorry for it."

"It's all right," the priest said, smiling. "Now say a good Act of Contrition."

It took the old man many minutes to say

it, but it was a good, sincere prayer. "I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy grace," he concluded, "to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen."

The priest raised his hand in absolution, "Go in peace," he said, "and pray for me."

The girl with the coloured kerchief followed the old man in the confessional. She was heard, and the priest left. Shortly after, she tip-toed out, and the old man was left alone in the dark church, slumped over the seat, and still.

The wind subsided a little after midnight, and there was a light rain that lasted until dawn. The first of the sun's rays shone through the windows of the church, and the rain stopped. The two small candle flames glimmered faintly, and went out.

"For in six days, the Lord made the heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is—and rested the seventh day."



Rain

By
R. H. BLACKBURN

There'll be some pasture now, and good long
heads on the wheat;
There'll be some garden, too, I guess, and
the women can have some flowers;
There'll be a green look to the trees, and
water in the old creek bottom;
And the land will smell alive again, and
the dirt won't burn your feet.

Three days ago the sun was red as a clinker
in the stove;
Heat rippled over the south hill, and the
soil was like wood-ashes;
The wheat out on the west half was thin
and brown and wilted;
And the cattle bawled at the water-hole in
the old homesteader grove.

After supper the black clouds, and the sun
was sizzled out.

We thought it was only the dust again, but
sudden it started to sprinkle,
And before we could get the tubs out, it
was coming a real soaker,
And all that night it slapped the roof like
the end of a wet dish-clout.

Three days - - - and it has sunk down,
where I dug to see, for a foot.
The sun looked out this suppertime and
splashed into the skyline,
So I guess the rain is done now; but the
slough is full of water,
And the blackness in the garden now is
mud instead of soot.

And now there'll be some pasture, and the
wheat will have good head,
There'll be hay to cut in August, and spuds
to store for winter,
There'll be water in the old creek, and some
flowers for the women:
There'll be smiles around the house again,
and the land will not be dead.

MILFORD GILHOOLEY AND THE DIGNITY OF MAN

By
JACK CRAINE

Milford Gilhooley was a scientist because his father wanted him to be a plumber. Milford's parents seldom agreed on anything, so when it was suggested that their son become apprenticed at the age of sixteen to W. H. Dalrymple and Son, Mrs. Gilhooley quite naturally rebelled. Although Milford had his heart set on being a parking-lot attendant, she convinced him that science was the only sensible career. And that was how Milford became a nuclear physicist, developed the famous Gilhooley microscope, and discovered the legislative assemblies on Carbon 12.

One day when his great new microscope was nearing completion Milford decided to stay after work and test the finished equipment. So at noon he packed a light lunch (two cheese sandwiches and a bottle of milk), and when five o'clock came round he sent Miss Fairbairn and Mr. Jenkins straight home without letting them even dry their test tubes.

Milford ate his first cheese sandwich while he examined the new lenses. Resting in a bed of white cotton they looked cold and efficient, until the fluorescent lights flickered suddenly. Then the ground-glass sparkled warmly. Milford was so eager to fire the stream of electrons that he could hardly swallow his second glass of milk.

At last the delicate lenses were fitted. Slowly the air was pumped from the vacuum tube. Surely the rheostat knobs were adjusted. Only a moment's wait and then the revealing beam of electrons would dash across the eyepiece. With a shiver of excitement Milford picked up the first material he could find—the crust of his cheese

sandwich—and thrust it under the powerful lens.

For the first annoying minute the hand adjustment worked rather stiffly, but then Milford relaxed as the thumbscrew and the breadcrumb swept into sharp focus. Tall towers of ice poked their jagged peaks into the strange third dimension of the eyepiece. The huge glacier of starch was magnified into an Alpine wonderland. But this was no new sight and Milford gave it only passing attention as he increased the electron stream to a new magnitude. Now the lens was filled with a tapestry of grey shadows in which Milford could define each minute starch grain. But soon these too expanded out of focus. In the clearing lens individual molecules stood forth. This WAS an achievement thought Milford in a glow of satisfaction.

The focus was still quite sharp as he gave the thumbscrew another half turn—the half turn that was to make history. Milford saw an atom!

In such a situation Milford could quite easily have burst into song, but scientific dignity steadied him. Then he gave the screw another half turn and even science was shaken! The tiny carbon atom in the centre of the lens had suddenly awakened into a moving pattern of protons and electrons. Around the glowing nucleus, like planets around the sun, tiny balls of light were sweeping in graceful orbits. Milford was actually watching an electron! And still there remained the prospect of one more turn of the screw. His fingers moved cautiously, turning it with meticulous care. A quarter of a turn went by. Another

notch clicked into position. A turn, a click, a turn, and then, abruptly, a stop.

Under Milford's very eyes the tiny electron that a moment before had seemed a replica of the planets around a sun had suddenly loomed into infinite largeness, and Milford's startled gaze was fixed now on a moving, living, world. A land mass was clearly distinguishable from a large body of water. Mountains rose above valleys. While Milford watched, the lens cleared to show tiny roadways leading to a miniature settlement. It was as if he were looking at the earth from a vantage point ten miles up in the stratosphere.

With trembling fingers he gave the thumbscrew one last tap. The result was epic. Milford went limp all over. It was as he had dared not believe: there were people in the picture! The tiny settlement had grown to reveal individual streets and buildings where human beings lived and moved. Milford was thunderstruck! The electron had LOOKED like a planet; Gilhooley's microscope had shown that it WAS a planet. A planet of hope and happiness; a world where people worshipped and worried; a state where men commanded and were led. Somewhere on that pin-prick a poet was tuning his soul with the Universe, an anarchist was plotting the overthrow of a government. In a crowded square people were acclaiming a hero, in a warm room men were condemning a thief. Women talked, men worked and children played—all unaware of the great omnipotent eye overlooking their scene.

Milford was gathering his strength over the last of his cheese sandwiches when he realized the full magnitude of his discov-

ery. Someone must share this first impact of the find! He raced down the hall to the telephone in the rotunda. Miss Fairbairn and Mr. Jenkins must come at once, he shouted into the startled phone, unable to breathe even a syllable of his tremendous news. He said good-bye and held the receiver dumbly in his hand for a full minute before he could collect his thoughts and start the trek back to his new found world.

At the door of the laboratory he stopped, jarred from his reverie by a bevy of tiny squeals. He pulled open the door. Before his eyes four plump guinea pigs were scrambling over the wax paper that a few minutes before had held his lunch. Miss Fairbairn had gone home without locking their cage!

Milford rushed in with arms waving, then pulled to a sudden stop. Beside his precious microscope the fattest and laziest of the small animals was licking the glass slide that, until five minutes before, had drawn Milford's breathless attention. The guinea pig was going to eat the bread-crumbs! Milford was jolted into violent action. He rushed forward and grabbed the furry ball of white, just as it gulped the crumb with a startled burp.

Milford stared unbelievably. The bread-crumbs were gone; countless grains of starch were being digested in the little animal's mouth; a million carbon atoms were being swallowed. Milford cried aloud in anguish. A guinea pig had gulped a crumb: a billion electrons had been devoured; a race of people was being digested. A thoughtless rodent had just eaten a legislative assembly—and it didn't matter!



In Science, read, by preference, the newest works; in literature, the oldest. The classic literature is always modern.—Edward Bulwer Lytton, *Hints on Mental Culture*.



THE HOUSE BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD

E. Pickering





THE "CORSICAN"

J. A. Twyman



THE TOMSHAK TRUMPETER SWAN

By Courtesy of Mr. Tomshak

THE TRUMPETER SWAN

By
ISOBEL
LOGGIE

Just north of the town of Clairmont, on the Peace River-Grande Prairie highway, is a white farmhouse beside a large pond of water; and living on this water is one of the rarest sights in the world . . . a tame trumpeter swan. This swan (*Cygnus buccinator*) is a massive bird, the largest of North American wildfowl and the heaviest bird that flies. On the average the bird measures five and one-half feet from tail to head with a wing spread of ten feet. Captive birds usually weigh about forty pounds, while the wild ones, because of their harder life, weigh from thirty to thirty-five pounds.

The trumpeter swan differs from the whistling swan in sometimes living near buildings and in not being afraid of people even when not used to them. A wild trumpeter can be watched at a distance of twenty yards. The peculiar call, like that of a horn in quality, is the result of the bird's windpipe and sternum formation. There are about 1,500 of the species left in the world, most of them in the interior of Western Canada. In the Peace River Country the count is estimated at 300 birds, all within a fifty mile radius of Grande Prairie. In winter these birds migrate to British Columbia and Southeast Alaska.

Four years ago Mr. Joe Tomshak found a nest of young swans on a neighboring lake which was drying up. He brought three back to the farm with him, leaving the others to their fate for fear the parents would leave the lake for good if they found their nest empty. Later two of the abandoned swans were found dead, having apparently attempted to travel across land

to another lake. Mr. Tomshak sent one of the three cygnets to the Edmonton zoo and obtained permission from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to keep the other two, on condition that he turn them loose in the spring. When spring came the birds were freed, but refused to leave, although both were able to fly. As a matter of fact, their flying power became a nuisance, for their favorite sport was to fly up behind members of the Tomshak family and "zoom" off a hat or two; or else just hit from behind with all the force of their forty pounds. The Tomshaks tried leaving them by neighboring lakes, but they came home as surely as homing pigeons would have.

For three years the swans were part of the farm life. Then, last winter, one was killed on the highway. It was apparently floating on a small patch of water in the highway and refused to leave for the car. The birds are fearless, and will attack even a car. The remaining bird is as tame as a domestic chicken, living on the slough a few yards from the farmhouse in the summer and in the chicken house during the winter. It comes gliding into shore gleaming white on the dark, still water, voicing its peculiar trumpet-like call, to eat out of a person's hand.

Until a few years ago there was only one picture of the trumpeter swan on record, and ornithologists believed that it was too wild to be seen at close hand. In 1948 a group of scientists came from the United States to investigate rumors of existing trumpeter swans in the Grande Prairie district. Imagine their surprise and delight when they found the Tomshak swans! By watching these swans and other wild ones in the area the scientists obtained their first accurate information on a bird that they had thought was vanishing like the whooping crane.

The young swans on the Tomshak farm were light grey in color for the first two years. Late in their second year they became pure white except for the brownish patches on the top of their heads which are

retained for life. The trumpeter does not breed until its fourth or fifth year, although it mates for life during the second. The life span is approximately seventy years. The scientists photographed all aspects of the swan's life, mainly among the wild ones, where they disproved the accepted theory that trumpeters never call while on the water. The hatching of eggs and the struggles of young cygnets to climb out the nest were all recorded by the camera.

The swans eat seeds, grain (especially from grain fields near the lakes), insects, snails and small reptiles. They are bottom feeders and most deaths among them are the result of lead poisoning when the birds swallow shotgun pellets which have fallen to the bottom of the water. There is small danger of death by shooting, for the farmers and townspeople of the district are more than proud and ready to protect their rare guests. Lack of food in wintering grounds or the drying of sloughs may cause death by starvation or enable the swan's chief enemies, the coyote and eagle, to prey upon it while it is in a weakened condition. Ordinarily the swan is a formidable enemy because of its size; and on the whole the trumpeter seems to be holding its own in the struggle for existence.

Watching the Tomshak swan shows that swans have their moods. When relaxed and at ease the bird holds his neck in a graceful curve, while a straight neck is a sign of danger and a sharp curve means anger.

When about to fly the bird pumps his neck up and down, at the same time trumpeting and swimming around to test wind direction. He will then swim to the downwind end of the slough and take off. The takeoff is always into the wind and two or three hundred feet in length. For the first fifty feet the swan is just running over the surface of the water—then he pulls himself up and draws in his legs. He prefers to take off from the land because the run is done more easily. The bird always lands into the wind, hitting the water at the edge of the downwind side.

After his partner was killed, the remaining swan went wild, upsetting horses and sleighs on the highway and becoming a real menace before he calmed down. Now that he is alone, some of his habits have changed. He and his partner had their likes and dislikes, chief among the latter being geese. The Tomshaks had to keep theirs penned up. The swan no longer threatens the geese and tolerates them along with the ducks, mallards and chickens that live in the yard.

The tame swan has never yet shown any desire to follow his wild brethren to their wintering grounds. The Tomshak farm has been his home for four years and probably would have been for the rest of his life if he had not lost his partner. Perhaps this fall his longing for his kind will be stronger than the ties that hold him to the farm and he will leave. Then the white house with the white swan would no longer be a landmark in the country.

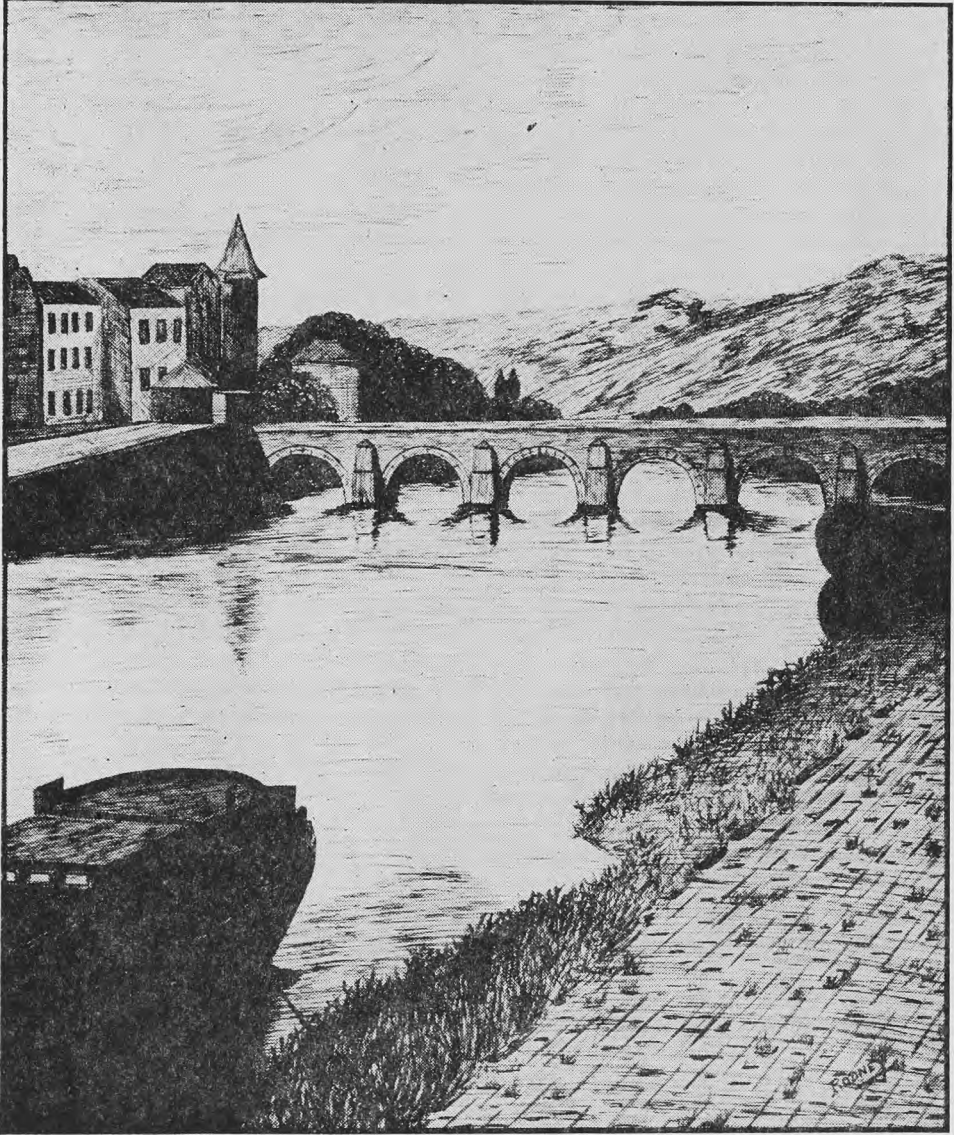


HELLO SPRING

When it's crocus time on the prairies,
And the sweeping fields turn blue,
With a dainty carpet of color,
As the soft, furry heads push through,

Our hearts skip a beat at the promise,
Of Spring and a Summer so gay,
As nature in all her splendor,
Suddenly opens the way.

—L. Armstrong Maze.



LA MEUSE ET LE PONT DE JAMBES, NAMUR, BELGIQUE

By Rodney

On Listening To Recorded Music

by

Harold V. Rice
University of Alberta

During the last ten years or so the techniques of recording music and sounds in general on disks, wire, tape, and over the radio, have been so greatly improved that under appropriate circumstances, music heard through such media can be almost as good as the original production. There is no doubt that these improvements in techniques have been responsible not only for the great growth of recorded music, but also for a spread of the appreciation of music through the general use of this medium. It is, however, not recognized by many people that the best is obtainable out of recordings and broadcast music only when circumstances are right to permit good reproduction of it. Furthermore, it is often not recognized that in spite of the fact that engineering know-how has made it possible to preserve music with a high degree of fidelity, there is nevertheless much recorded music put out which falls far short of the ideal.

It is the purpose of this paper to discuss some of the factors which come into play in the process of recording and reproducing music, and also some of the physiological factors involved in our hearing of it.

It would be well to review first some of the peculiarities of our sense of hearing. Hearing is a very acute sense. The amount of energy required to make an audible sensation upon our brain is extremely small, and few people have ever been in a noiseless environment. For one who has never experienced absolute silence, suddenly to be unassailed by sounds of any kind is a pecu-

liar and disconcerting sensation. We are, in fact, so accustomed to noises of all kinds that we accept them as part of the normal situation.

While the amount of energy required in the form of vibrations in the audible range to produce a sensation of sound is very small, it is true that under normal circumstances the ear is capable of receiving without injury a degree of energy which greatly exceeds this threshold limit. We are constantly being subjected to sounds which vary in intensity from a minimum to a painful intensity, and the ear adjusts itself as also does the rest of the body to this wide range of forces with amazing ability.

If one listens to sounds at what is called the threshold level, that is, the level at which they are just discernible, the ear actually behaves as a somewhat different organ from the way it behaves when the sounds are intense. It is generally stated that the average human can ordinarily hear sounds having frequencies per second from somewhere between 30 and 15,000. The majority of sounds, however, lie in the range between one hundred and two or three thousand per second, depending, of course, on the nature of the source of the sound. If the sensitivity of the ear is tested at the threshold level it is found that sounds in this middle register are readily perceived. But there may be vibrations in the atmosphere above and below the middle range which may not be perceived, whereas the same intensity of vibrations at 400 cycles per second is heard. This means

that when we are listening to very quiet sounds, the tendency is for the ear to pick out the middle register more dominantly and the sounds appear to be rather thin and have no body to them, largely owing to the lack of bass. For similar reasons, a critical ear can discern a lack of brilliance owing to the inability of the ear to perceive the high frequencies at this low energy level.

These general actions of the ear when sounds are quiet are of considerable significance when one is listening to music. Thus if a radio or a gramophone, for example, is turned down very low (that is in terms of the physical forces involved, the energy at all frequencies is at a low level), the lows and the highs are not heard. The frequencies, however, in the middle register may still be of sufficient intensity to be heard by the ear, though the low and the high frequencies are not. This accounts for a generally accepted observation amongst listeners to music that when the volume is turned down too low, the full qualities of the sound are destroyed and the music does not seem real. Since the ranges of human voice sounds are in the middle register, spoken words do not sound abnormal under these conditions. But a deficiency is evident in music because of its wide range of frequencies. This defect nowadays can largely be overcome by incorporating into the reproducing equipment devices which boost the treble and the bass above the levels of the middle register. Such boosting devices are particularly valuable when one wants to listen to music quietly because it is possible by making the low and high vibrations of greater intensity than the middle register to maintain the sensation of evenness of quality over the whole audible range even when the volume of the radio is turned to a low level.

Such adjustments of the means of reproducing music obviously introduce a certain degree of distortion, a distortion which, of course, serves a useful purpose. In actual fact anyone who has become used to the technique of modulating sound so that the intensities at different frequencies are adjusted to the peculiarities of their own ear, will never be satisfied with a reproducing apparatus which amplifies frequencies equally. It is in this sphere that the pecu-

liarities of the biological recording system which is the human ear come into play, and upset many of the fixed concepts of sound as described in physical terms.

In the absence of recording or reproducing devices to modulate the sounds depending on the intensity at which they are being heard, the average music lover generally prefers to turn the volume up high. This, of course, raises the energy level of all frequencies of sound equally so that, of course, all of them become audible. But a change also occurs in the ear when the sounds are louder in that the sensitivity to low and very high sounds increases proportionately more than does the responsiveness to the middle register. Therefore, though all the sounds are louder in the ear owing to the increased intensity level when the volume of the radio is turned up, the low and the treble ranges sound proportionately louder and this accounts for the sensation of greater "body" as well as greater brilliance in music when one is listening with a high volume. Under these circumstances, of course, one does not require to modulate the low and the high frequencies by boosting their intensities separately and it is possible to hear all notes when their frequencies have a more or less equal intensity without introducing bass and treble boosts. The problem is, of course, that to hear the music this way, that is, at an overall high volume, introduces a certain amount of discomfort and irritation to others who are within range of it.

In the course of making a recording the engineers allow for many of these peculiarities of the human ear by putting on the record intensities of vibration at the low and high frequencies which are actually augmented prior to the recording, so that when they are reproduced even at a low energy level, there is already a considerable accentuation of the bass or the treble or both. This makes up for the ear's deficiency at the extremes of the scale when one is listening to the sounds at an ordinary room intensity. However, when this is done, a certain distortion becomes evident if such recordings are played at a high intensity level, for then both the bass and the treble appear to be grossly exaggerated and the sounds appear markedly distorted. This is due to the fact that the ear at such

high levels is already capable of hearing the low and the high sounds and if, in addition, these are coming out of the recording to an exaggerated degree because of the way the recording was made, then the hearing response is rather unpleasant.

It is recognized now that hearing is identical in no two individuals. Our hearing responses are very like the facial expressions. They vary with the individual and are more or less characteristic of each individual. It is obvious, therefore, that any mechanical (especially mass production) system which attempts to put out a universal type of sound reproducing machine is incapable of satisfying all individuals. For this reason, there is good justification for the modern trend to incorporate into reproducing devices controls which permit the individual to set the play-back apparatus the way he wants it. He is the only one who can tell how much bass he wants boosted or suppressed and what proportion of highs he wants to be exaggerated or reduced. It is equally true that the interpretation of sounds even at their source, for example, from a violin, is a highly individual one and what is pleasant to one person may not be equally pleasant to another, or may at least sound different. There is in fact, then, no arbitrary physical means based on any absolute standards by which a company can devise or manufacture a universally acceptable musical instrument or a universally acceptable reproducer of music.

On listening to recorded music the critical listener is continually struck by the amazing difference in quality of the reproductions. First there is the presence of extraneous sounds such as needle scratch, a continuous hissing noise having a frequency of some two to five thousand cycles per second. This is due partly to the grain of the wax but is more commonly due to some inherent resonance of a mechanical type in the needle or in the other components of the recording equipment. Needle scratch can now be almost entirely eliminated by the use of pick-ups which have a small mechanical inertia and therefore a very high resonance, which can actually be put up above the audible range. Reduction of needle scratch has also been facilitated recently by the use of plastics for

record making in which the grain is much finer than in wax. Furthermore, the current trend to the use of slowly revolving records rather than the 78 RPM old style is also another factor tending to reduce the amount of extraneous noise due to particulate matter on the surface of the record; but more about this later on.

There is another aspect to radio and recorded music which is worth considering by anyone interested in high quality reproduction. It is impossible to reproduce from a small radio or gramophone all the sounds in the audible spectrum. High frequency notes are well brought out by a small speaker in a small case. But the low notes cannot be reproduced with such small equipment and therefore all music reproduced from such tiny sets sounds thin and tinny. There is a good physical reason for the inability to reproduce bass notes adequately on a small machine. If the frequency of the notes is low enough, the wave of condensation which is emitted as the diaphragm moves forward is neutralized by the wave of rarefaction which sweeps around from the opposite side of the speaker. Consequently, in effect, the vibration for that particular frequency is neutralized and a sound wave never reaches the ear. If, however, a large area is made to extend on either side of the speaker (through the use of what is called a baffle) the wave of rarefaction has not time to be neutralized by its own wave of compression for any one cycle. Consequently, the sound wave travels out to the atmosphere and reaches the ear. It will be noticed that on public address systems where a speaker is used, for example in skating rinks, the speaker is set in a large board usually four or five feet across, and this board is the baffle referred to. The same effect is created by installing the speaker in a large cabinet, in which case the cabinet serves as a baffle and permits the reproduction of the low notes. Furthermore, the reproduction of an adequate volume of low frequencies is also facilitated by using a large size speaker. It is common experience, therefore, that the best radio sets and gramophones are equipped with large speakers and are housed in a large case.

On the other hand, such large speakers

which are designed to bring out good low notes have an inherent inertia which makes it difficult for them to reproduce the high notes adequately. Consequently, many such large sets have a booming quality without the necessary brilliance which is provided by the high notes. The best sets compensate for this defect by having two speakers, one large of twelve or fifteen inches for the bass notes, and one small speaker of three or five inches for the high notes. The combination of the two then permits the reproduction of the whole frequency spectrum and the creation of sounds similar to those at the source.

The matter of the size of the speaker is of importance not only in that it helps to balance the reproducible audible frequencies, but it also introduces another phenomenon which is sometimes referred to as the mass or body of sound. What is meant by this term can be best illustrated by comparing the tonal quality of a large seven or nine foot concert grand piano, with a small apartment size. Both these pianos are capable of creating notes having roughly the same frequency range. Yet the concert grand provides a massiveness and a body of sound, a beauty of tone, which is incapable of being produced from a small-sized apartment piano. One must not confuse the sensation of loudness created by the two instruments with this peculiar phenomenon of the massiveness of sound. For example, it is possible to play on a small piano heavily and thus create a very loud sound. Nevertheless, this sound has not got the same full quality as the sound produced from a larger piano even though the latter is played very lightly. The same effect is noted in the comparison of the tonal qualities of a large and a small orchestra. Many small orchestras have roughly the same balance of instruments and the same range of tonal colors as a large orchestra. But whereas the large orchestra may have forty or fifty violins, the small orchestra has only ten or twenty and the effect of the small one is quite different from that of the large one in spite of the fact that they are playing the same notes. It is not yet explained how the superimposition of many instruments playing identical notes produces a different and better quality. It is not explained

either how it is that the ear fails to get unpleasant interference from the beat notes from the many violins, for example, of a symphony orchestra. It is a fact, nevertheless, that the ear differentiates between the qualities of a massive and a thin sound and this massiveness is apparently related to the large surface area of the many violins or the many wind instruments playing simultaneously.

The same arguments are applicable to the reproduction of sounds through a loudspeaker. It is now a generally accepted experience that if one wishes to have the fullest degree of "body" from an orchestra recording, two or three speakers provide this with greater effectiveness than does a single speaker. Whether or not this is due to the peculiar interactions of the slight individual differences of the two speakers or whether it is due to the fact that the total surface area vibrating simultaneously is greater, is not yet certain. It does appear, however, that if one wants to get the best out of music, the wider the surface area vibrating simultaneously the better the results, which usually means that the best and most expensive radios and gramophones are equipped with two or three speakers connected together.

With respect to the advantages and disadvantages of the various types of recordings now on the market, a few words might be worthwhile. First, it is a personal opinion that there is no need for the 45 RPM records. It appears that the introduction of this type of record was necessitated due to competition in the business world and that no particular value is gained by using this rotation speed. For a long time 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ RPM has been one of the accepted methods of reproducing sounds or music and since this permits a longer playing time on a given surface, the sensible thing appears to be to make use of this speed rotation.

At the present time there are then two main types of record, first, the old-style 78 RPM, usually of wax disks on which a 12-inch record lasts three to four and a half minutes. The disadvantages of this are the requirement of changing records frequently or if there is a mechanical changer, the break in the continuity of music which results at each change. Furthermore, when

one accumulates a considerable number of such albums the amount of space taken up and their weight become a real problem. Also it is impossible on the rapidly moving surface of the 78 RPM record made of wax to eliminate completely the element of surface scratch

Within the last three years or so the development of the finely engineered 33½ RPM plastic record has eliminated the major disadvantages of the old-style recordings. Enough music can be recorded on one 12-inch disk to last a half to three-quarters of an hour. There is an insignificant amount of needle scratch, and in the best pressings the fidelity is amazing. A warning should be pointed out, however, that of the twenty or more companies making 33 RPM plastic records, many of these pressings are of inferior quality. Also experience in the use of plastics has not yet reached its final degree, and there is some tendency to over-emphasize or under-emphasize certain components of the fre-

quency spectrum. Refinements of these defects are gradually being worked out and there appears to me to be no doubt that in the next few years one will see the 33 RPM record used almost exclusively, replacing the older style wax 78 RPM.

Like all other forms of artistic presentation, the collection and the playing of records is a connoisseur's art. For the person who has no curiosity and no real critical faculty anything, of course, will do. But to the real critic, it is not good enough simply to buy a record and play it. One must be sure that the apparatus through which the record is played is adequate for one's own taste, and furthermore, that the recording itself as purchased meets one's own critical appraisal. It is only when more and more people become critical of what they purchase and are insistent upon obtaining only the best that we will have the development of acceptable recordings and the final attainment of the best in musical reproducers.



FACE IN THE WATER

By CLIFFORD SHELTON

A small boy lay at full length on a large flat rock, at the edge of a deep, green pool. His chubby face, snub-nosed and freckled, was filled with curiosity. Reflected in the water, his eyes, bright with young inquisitiveness, stared back with puckish anticipation. A breeze wrinkled the surface, and the boy smiled to see his reflection dance with the ripples. The breeze fled into the willows, which grew well back from the water's edge. The pool was quiet, deep, and full of mystery. The boy's eyes twinkled; his small white teeth shone in the liquid mirror.

Before his approach, the birds had twittered in the willows, flitting like merry young housewives with choice bits of gossip from door to door. On a sunny strip of

sand along the far side of the water, a bull-frog had roared his note; and his fellows had replied, one by one, until the diapason was one full and glorious chorus. Abruptly, the conductor had brought them to a stop, only to lead off again with his great "wumming" bass. Then, with the boy's coming, the triumphant prelude had terminated on a creak of alarm. The frogs had slipped quietly into the depths of the pool, seeking in the muddy bottom the dark green refuge of rushes.

Now the birds and the frogs were still; the pool, quiet and unrevealing. The boy inched a little closer, his fingers gripping the rock's edge to pull himself along. His lips parted in a smile. Even his freckles showed in the water. He remembered his

Grandad asking him how many there were, and he counted, for fun.

In the cozy mud, not far from the silent bullfrogs, a slimy creature crawled in frank disdain of their watchful eyes. Its dark back with its thin yellow bands was indistinguishable from the shadows in which it moved. Its stubby toes dug into the filth at the bottom of the water, stirred little whirlpools of yellow mud into the gloomy depths. Its lidless eyes, dark and staring, sought a victim for its voracious appetite. Slowly it climbed, lifting itself on short, crooked legs along the stout stem of a bulrush, and reached out in silent attack for an unwary leech. A snap of its jaws, a quiver of its reddish gills, and the creature slipped back into the mud, the leech drawn down to the bottom to be crushed alive. The mud-puppy had claimed another victim. Now it lay quietly on the bottom, seemingly unaware of the bullfrogs, which had watched it feed. Tonight, in the clearer waters of the brook, it would seek daintier fare.

Above, a dragonfly, its gauzy wings strumming the air, dipped to the water. Its greenish-blue body skimmed the surface. It hovered, its wings moving faster than eye could follow. Suddenly it touched the water, its tail broke through the surface, reached down again and again. The eggs it laid would hatch in the warmth of the sun. Not all of them. The minnows would devour many, the salamander would have its share. Those that hatched would devour, in their turn, the larvae of other insects. The dragonfly, its task at an end, whipped away into the rushes in stern pursuit of a mosquito.

When the boy looked up, it had disappeared. Only the rushes were there. He looked back into the water. For an instant, he thought he saw a fish, but it might have been the reflection of his own arm as he moved. He dipped his finger into the water. It was warm in the afternoon sun.

Tiny ripples fled from his inquisitive finger. A leech, near enough to feel the agitation in the water, clung tightly to its anchor of Arrowhead leaf and swung its head slowly from side to side. The ripples subsiding, it crept away in search of foraging snails. Slowly its fat, soft body pro-

pelled itself along the dark green eel-grass choking the edge of the pool. On the succulent leaves it found a dozen snails greedily feeding. Stealthily it attached itself to the nearest, grasping its squirming victim in a silent struggle, no less fierce than the attack of a thug. Its jaws sank into the flesh of its hapless neighbour. The powerful suction of its throat began its deadly work, and the leech fed quietly.

Above the water, along the fringe of bulrushes, a cloud of Mayflies, like a soft grey haze, swirled in undulating rhythm. Up and up into the willows they swung, then back to the surface of the pond. Theirs was a dance of death, a macabre but beautiful movement. How quickly numbered were their hours in the warmth of the sun! All too soon they fell to the surface of the pond, lifeless, twisted little bodies that floated like bits of gossamer until snatched into the mouths of predators lurking in the depths. The females, mated in the flight, swept down upon the water. Their eggs were laid, and then in death they joined their erstwhile mates. All was not lost to them. Deep in the clearer water, where the brook breaks free from the eel-grass, their nymphs lived on. Scores of them fed quietly in the oozy green slime that clung to the rocks.

The sun tipped the willow fringe, cast a golden shimmer over the pool. The boy looking into the water turned his head from side to side. He pushed his hands against his ears, spread his fingers wide, and grinned at the reflected gargoyles.

Among the pickerel weeds a swarm of tadpoles, like eager boys clambering aboard a bus, wriggled and pushed. They crowded a foraging snail, then fled in mock retreat, flicking their black tails as they went. Through a cloud of weaving nymphs they raced, scattering the startled larvae to the outer edge of the weedy retreat. Then on to the far end of the pond in merry chase. Below them, like an obelisk in stone, lay the mudpuppy, his lidless eyes watching their careless play. They passed over him, unaware of his presence. On they went to the shallow water where the sun fell warm upon the mud. They rested, and as they lingered, a toad raised himself

from his lair among the reeds. Quickly he struck, and like a flash the tadpoles fled his terrible jaws. This time they all escaped, but the toad was not perturbed. Slowly he sank back into his retreat. His body, bloated with earlier success, was reluctant to pursue.

The ripple of the drama had not passed unnoticed. A long, sinuous form uncoiled itself on the sunny margin and slithered to the water's edge. The triangular head was raised, the olive-green body coiled to strike. The snake awaited only the moment when the toad would raise itself in the shallows, as it always did, to squat on its forelegs in the warm water, its ugly, blunt nose raised to the sun. The vigil was long, but the snake was patient. The toad raised itself. Like lightning the snake struck, and the bloated cannibal was snatched from the very door-step of its reedy cove.

The boy looked up. He raised himself to his knees, looked at the faint ripples over the water a few yards away. Then, still on his knees, he launched a stone into the water to make more ripples.

In the water the impact of the stone was like a thunderclap. The leech paused in its feeding, the mudpuppy burrowed a little deeper into the mire. The tadpoles, though quite unaware of their late enemy's demise, fled to the shallows to escape the blast of sound. Nymphs scattered in all directions. Only the snails clung in stupid unconcern to the trembling eel-grass. The stone sank quickly to the bottom, to lie, shiny and smooth, beside those covered with slime and moss. The wavelets swelled the algae on the surface, spread it more thinly in the shallows. Where the pickerel weeds grew thickest, a string of toad's eggs, already swollen to bursting in the warm sun, trembled under the impact of the disturbed water, and a tadpole wriggled forth from the gelatinous mass. For a

moment it rested, then with uncertain motion made its way into the sheltering weeds. The water grew quiet again; life resumed its normal course.

The world in the pool lived on. The bloated mudpuppy already stuffed to bursting, watched with lidless eyes for more food. Though one leech had fallen to his voracious appetite, another leech had taken his fellow's place; and in his turn feasted upon the lowly snails. But there were many snails. Nature is prolific with the lower members of society. They grope toward eternal existence through force of numbers. In the pickerel weeds a tadpole rested awhile ready, when he had strength enough, to grow to such proportions that the reedy cove in the shallows would again shelter a warty toad, a menace for unwary youngsters of his own family. Again the snake would be fed, and in due time, rest beneath his favorite rock. The water teemed with life, with struggling minutiae of the insect world. Pale nymphs fled their mortal foes, to grow and thrive until that day when they would escape into the air as Mayflies, mosquitoes, or dragonflies, each in the form of its progenitor. Society cannot die down here in the waters of the pond where life first drew its breath. Though death stalk through its depths, though stones, like bombs, blast its foundations, from the very mud the germ of life will crawl into being to build anew nature's most persistent society.

The boy took one last look into the water, then clambering to his feet, plucked a willow branch with which to drive off mosquitoes. Slowly he made his way through the meadow grass until he was home with his grandmother.

"Where have you been?" she asked.

"At the pond."

"What did you see there?"

"I saw my face in the water."



PROMISE ME

By
BERNICE THOMPSON



Ministers' children learn early to open their front doors with caution and respect, for they never know what they will find in the front parlour. If the unmistakable hum of feminine voices is heard, shy children retreat at once to the kitchen, where buttered bread and little cakes are waiting to tempt the Ladies' Aid. On the other hand, a wailing baby surrounded by obviously doting relatives is a certain sign that a baptism is in progress. If a lone adult is speaking with the minister, he is regarded with uncertainty—he may be an Insurance Agent or someone in need of ministerial aid. But if, on opening the front door, the children step into a hushed and solemn atmosphere, broken only by the reverence of the minister's church voice, they know at once that a wedding is taking place.

Weddings fascinated my sister and me. As far back as I can remember, we were allowed to be present (on the condition of our strict silence) at all the weddings in the manse. At times we had to be very careful to avoid each others' eyes, but I remember only one occasion on which we were overcome by the laughter we tried to stifle. The bride and groom were obviously very nervous. Father stood with his back to the fireplace (his favorite position, until one day when he scorched his coat tails. After that the weddings took place in front of the window). From where I was standing, I saw the groom's hands convulsively opening and shutting. Though the room was cool, his face was fiery, and he breathed heavily, with his mouth slight-

ly open. His bride repeated the vows in faint but steady voice, but he had a little trouble, and after every phrase gave an audible gulp; his vows went like this:

"I (gulp) John (gulp) take thee (gulp) tobemy (gulp) awful wedded wife."

The groom's mother bit her lips and looked industriously in her purse. The bride's father looked studiously out of the window. It was more than we could bear; the remainder of the ceremony was completed without us. When the congratulations and kisses began, I returned to the parlour, just in time to hear the groom ask Father how much he charged. Father, looking taken-aback, said rather feebly, that it was just whatever the groom wanted to give.

"Would two fifty be enough?" asked the groom.

Father said yes, that would be enough, so the groom produced a five dollar bill; and, not being able to find the correct change, Father, still looking surprised, wrote him a cheque.

Particularly unforgettable is a wedding that took place some time ago. Unknown to me, the wedding party had made arrangements with Father to drive in from the country, do some last-minute shopping, and dress for the wedding in the manse. After school that afternoon, I came home and leaped upstairs to my room. An old and wrinkled lady was dressing a small child in it, and the door shut with a decisive bang in my amazed face. The other doors shut with equally loud bangs. I went downstairs and checked to see if I was in the

right house. I was. Mother and Father and my sister arrived home a little later to find the dog and me sitting in the kitchen, looking mournfully at each other.

The wedding went off as bindingly as usual. I had to hold the bride's baby brother on my lap. His mother warned me to tickle the back of his neck if he began to cry. So I tickled the back of that solid little neck continuously, until the groom kissed the bride, for if I stopped a moment an ominous pouting began. He was the heaviest baby I ever hope to hold, and as a result of that grim experience I have never since been able to look at a child with equanimity. A more temporary result of that wedding was a concerted rush to open the windows, after the party filed out. My sister was especially annoyed, as a boy she liked was coming to dinner that evening, and she couldn't think of a tactful way to tell him that the distinctly unwashed odour did not belong to us.

There was a rather nice sequel to this particular wedding a week later, when the groom returned with a beautiful flowering plant, "for our kindness", and the touching words:

"My wife is my first love, and flowers are my second."

After every wedding, Father promptly hid the Record Book, and we almost as promptly found it. It gave away the ages and occupations and backgrounds of the brides and grooms, and was a fascinating book to read, especially on rainy days. We amused ourselves by filling in the bare frameworks with entrancing stories. The Record Book often revealed more than the bride's age though.

Our favorite bride was a little foreign girl who was beautiful in a mail-order dress and a white cotton veil. Her hair was a soft, pale gold and her profile was very young and delicate. Shyness kept her silent, but her mother was voluble enough. There were four in the wedding party, and the mother explained that it was the custom to decorate them with herbs. She pinned myrrh on the bride's veil and placed a sprig in the groom's buttonhole. The myrrh had been grown at home in a little pot, for the occasion. There wasn't quite enough to go

around the party, and it was eked out with cheap icebox flowers from the fifteen cent stores. The men looked rather sheepish with the huge boutonniers, but made no protest. We stood, and the marriage began. After the preliminary prayers, Father began the "wilt thou have's", when the bride interrupted him with a tremulous "Could we kneel, please?" They could. Down they went on their knees on the parlour carpet, and Father married them with a pleased expression on his face. After, when my sister and I looked in the Record Book we found that she had made an X instead of signing her name, for she could not read or write.

Whenever the groom kissed the bride, I used to poke my sister, and we found it hard to keep our faces straight. This moment came of course, after the benediction. If the groom appeared at a loss, Father would tell him what to do, in a loud whisper. Usually the bride received an embarrassed, gingerly peck. Then Father always remarked paternally, "That didn't take so long, did it?" He was, naturally, referring to the marriage service.

Recently, a soldier made arrangements to be married in the minister's home. There were two bridesmaids, a flower girl, the best man, and the bride and groom in the wedding party. They arrived over an hour late, and were unapologetic. They seemed to fill the parlour; the bride and her attendants were in formal dresses and though there were no wedding guests, the room suddenly seemed over-crowded. As he opened the Common Order, Father's face was a bit grim; his voice was brisk. The service over, the benediction ended, all looked expectantly at the groom, who stood in a kind of apathy. Time to take a hand, thought Father, and he whispered loudly, "Salute the bride." The groom stepped back a pace and brought his hand up smartly. "No," came Father's agonized tones, "Kiss her." The soldier obligingly complied. Time passed. He continued to comply. The best man stood first on one foot and then on the other. Mother blushed and looked out the window. The flower girl looked on interestedly. Then an unministerial, baleful whisper "Break it up!"

As we watched the happy couple drive away Mother looked at Father with her subtle, interrogative expression. Father appeared slightly chagrined.

"No fee," he stated flatly. We all looked at each other blankly. Father chuckled, and suddenly we were laughing uproariously.



Mary Had a Little Lamb

after Robert Browning

I loved the lamb beyond all other friends;
She was my all and more than all to me;
I loved her. Sir, you may not comprehend—
You who have never owned a little lamb,
How all-absorbing such a love can be.
Loving she was, Sir, too; she often helped me
In her sweet willing way, to carry burdens:
When someone asked that I should take some luggage,
Many's the time I took it on the lamb.

Enough, I am enlarging open wounds.
I shall be brief. I always am, I hope,
To the point of abruptness, and the sacrifice
Of metre. But enough of this digression.
That lamb, as I have said, the sole possession
With which I was entrusted as a child,
Became the ruling passion of my life.
You, Sir, who callously eat mutton
Can never comprehend my depth of feeling.
Only one thing I hid from her, and that
I could not well avoid, God be my witness.
Yet even that cast shadows in the sunbeam
Of mutual love: I could not brook this strangeness
My act gave rise to. I would have no secrets
From such a creature.—I made resolve.
And then one frosty Friday in September
I took my lamb to school.

They laughed at me! D'you hear? They laughed and giggled
And pinched and pointed fingers at my loved one
And pulled its wool. I cursed those pupils,
Those morons without reason, without feeling.
Idiots! I stamped and raged; they laughed the harder,
And some were half admirant of my clowning.
Clowning! Zounds and God's bodykins! I choose
Never to clown. I turned and left the schoolroom
Unmoved by fusillades of gum and spitballs
And ribald laughter from that jeering throng,
And never returned. Nor shall I. Damn them all!

—F. D. Shelton.

Thy Name is Frailty

We took the scene in very slowly, for it was an unusual one. The door had opened suddenly after our second knock. In the doorway a man was silhouetted—small, with curly hair. He was dressed in blue overalls, his shirtsleeves rolled to the elbow. Behind him, in the room, were two other men and a woman, the latter sitting on a chair where she was held by the two men. Nor did the fact that the woman had a black eye, and one of the men three red scratches down his cheek, make us any less interested.

"We've just loaded up with slabs," said my companion, still staring over the small man's head at the curious scene in the room. No sooner had he announced his mission, than the two men holding the woman in her chair ceased staring at us, and recommenced what they had been doing when we knocked.

I watched the threesome. Certainly none of them was drunk, as the foreman at the main mill had promised us they would all be. What had that foreman said about not sawing today? I thought back four or five hours to when we had driven into the main mill of the Johnson series, and been greeted by a huge man in a fur cap, leather coat and rubber boots. He had looked at us, but said nothing.

"Got any slabs?" enquired my friend.

"Nope," said the large man.

I was disconcerted, but my companion, who apparently knew what he was about, showed no despair.

"Where do you figure we could get some?"

"Well," said the big man, "with that outfit, I ain't so sure you can get some." He looked without enthusiasm at our ungainly vehicle.

"Well, we gotta get some."

"I'll tell yuh what to do then," replied the foreman. "You'll have to go back five mile on the trail yuh come up on. Just

after yuh pass them slab buildings on yer right, yu'll see a bit of a trail takin' off into these here hills right here. Jist follow that there trail, and she'll take yuh over to Camp Four. They got lotsa slabs there."

"What's the trail like?" we asked him.

"It's like hell," was the answer. "She's jist dynamited and bulldozed outa the bush on the hills, and she's mighty bad in some places, 'specially where she's got snow on her. She goes pretty near straight up some places, too. You won't have too much trouble gettin' in there, but yuh might git tangled up comin' out with a load on. Yuh'd better be careful 'bout how much load you throw on, 'cause yuh got an awful pass to climb—Camp Four's down in the bottom of the next valley, and yuh gotta haul outa there."

"Okay," said my friend, and we climbed into the truck.

"By the way," shouted the big man over the noise of our engine, "there ain't but three four men over to Camp Four, and they'll all be drunk, 'cause we ain't sawin' today. The slabs are a cent a foot, so you jist leave the money in the office when you've finished."

"Okay," and we had rumbled back up the trail.

An hour later we looked down from the summit of the pass on to Camp Four. A huge circular blade, glinting in the sun, and two wooden shacks—nothing more that was human, in a wilderness of white peaks and evergreens. The people in the valley, I thought, must grow to be like the mountains about them—unchangeable — for they have little to do with the world which is outside their narrow home. I began to understand the foreman's lack of concern when he had said: "They'll all be drunk." It was inevitable that they should all be drunk. Man cannot maintain his veneer of civilization in such a savage place; he must become savage with his surroundings.

Dark had fallen when we finished loading slabs. There remained only to find the office, leave twenty-four dollars, and struggle back up the trail. We were still a hundred yards from one of the two shacks which showed lights, when we heard a shriek—a shriek of pain and terror—and as we drew nearer, we could hear a jumble of shouts, and a woman scream. Then my friend knocked, and we saw the interior of the shack with its four occupants, the woman with her black eye, the man with the three scratches on his cheek.

"Come on," shouted one of the two at the woman, twisting her arm painfully behind her until she shrieked in pain. "Whered'je hide it?" The other gaoler said nothing, but twisted from time to time the arm he held and grinned idiotically as the woman shrieked. She was only a young woman, rather pretty, I thought, but obviously used to a life of hard work. She said nothing.

"For God's sake," said the first, "we been down here two days without a drop, just because you get some damn crazy idea you don't like us to drink. What's a man to do if he can't drink?" He forced her arm between her shoulder blades. "I don't care if you're my wife or not, I'll pull your arms off if you don't tell us where you hid it." The woman set her teeth, but remained silent.

"How many slabs you taken?" asked the little man in the door, about whom we had quite forgotten.

"Three hundred," answered my friend, his attention all centred upon the trio inside the shack.

One of the two men—the one who was not the woman's husband grinned as the

other slapped her viciously across the face.

"Come on" he said then flying into a rage. "Come on by God, or I'll kill you. Where'd yuh hide the liquor?"

"Twenty-four bucks," said our little fellow. He snapped his fingers impatiently, for he was anxious to join his friends. "Twenty-four bucks." As my companion was digging for his wallet, I noticed the woman in the chair, watching us.

"Come on," shouted one of her torturers, "tell us where it is."

But the woman had lost all interest in her predicament. She shook off the two and leaped to her feet. All three men were much too surprised to resist her.

She strode over to the little man with whom we were transacting our business.

"What the hell's wrong with you?" she demanded of him. "These guys might have six hundred slabs on there. Give me the flashlight." She seized it from him, and stamped out the door towards the slab pile, while the five of us followed in a surprised and silent little group. The flashlight was playing over our load when we reached it.

"You've got four hundred on there if you've got ten," she snapped. "That'll be another ten bucks. I'll take it." We offered no resistance, but paid up quickly. There were only three hundred slabs on the load.

"Crooks," she muttered, counting the ten dollars. She turned and walked quickly back to the square of light which marked the door, the three men straggling along behind her. The door swung shut, and in a moment, faintly, for the shack was some distance away, we heard a woman scream.





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To encourage in Albertans an awareness of, and a pride in, their own Province and University.

To: STET MAGAZINE
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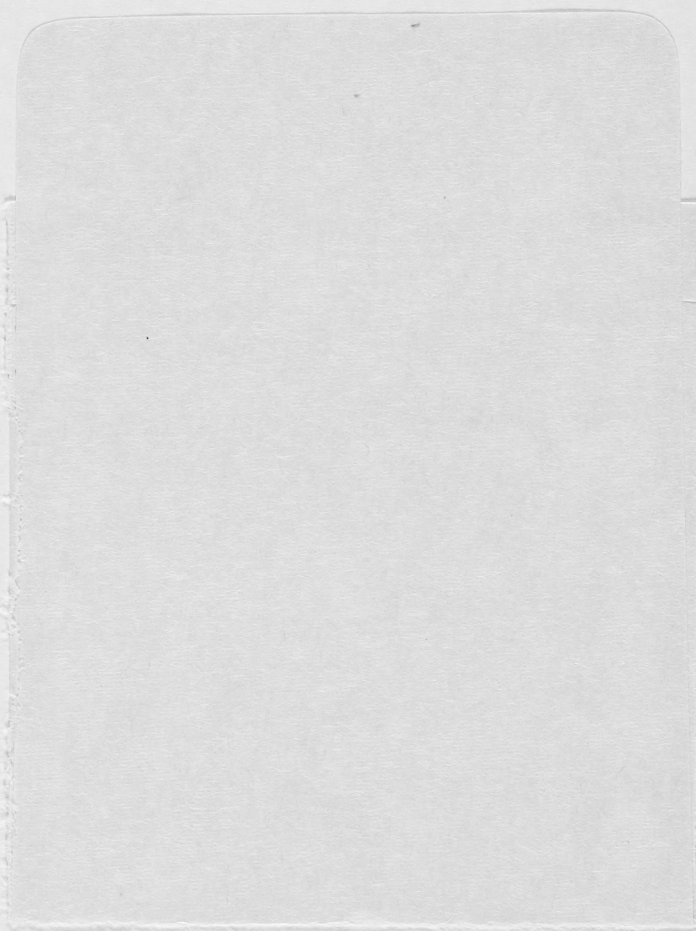
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